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From Independent Nation to Client State:  
The Metamorphosis of the Kingdom of Hawai'i  
in the Pages of the *North American Review*  
in the Nineteenth Century

ON FEBRUARY 1, 1893, United States Minister to Hawai'i John L. Stevens wrote home to Secretary of State John W. Foster, "The Hawaiian pear is now fully ripe and this is the golden hour for the United States to pluck it."<sup>1</sup> While Stevens may have been correct with regard to the condition of Hawai'i after nearly 100 years of United States involvement, the American people were not yet prepared to harvest the fruit of this labor.

The campaign for annexation of the Hawaiian Islands to the United States in 1893 sparked a national debate over imperial expansion and paved the way for the resurrection of "manifest destiny" in the late 1890s. From the advent of the arrival and settlement of American Protestant missionaries primarily from New England in 1820, through the consolidation of United States commercial and military superiority over other potential colonizers and the Hawaiians themselves in the mid-19th century, the actual process of conquest met with few obstacles. Attitudes of those living in the U.S. towards this process, however, did not follow so

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smoothly. Public opinion lagged behind events, and the cherished national image of fairness had to be squared with actual political and commercial self-interest before annexation could become an accomplished fact.

Bringing perceived reality into a consonant relationship with the desired course of action required a complete revision of current Hawaiian history. Advocates of annexation quoted liberally from the *Origin of Species* (1859) in support of their position, and Charles Darwin's comments on natural selection and the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race, especially in America, formed the basis for the expansionist theories of political scientist John Burgess, clergyman Josiah Strong, and others. They combined destiny, duty, religion, commercial interests, and naval strategy with evolution to produce what one historian has called "the imperialism of righteousness."<sup>2</sup> These apologists for armed United States intervention to achieve their annexationist agenda found that by placing Hawai'i and her people on the low end of the evolutionary spectrum they were able to achieve an acceptable solution, in the eyes of the American public, at least, to the ethical problem presented by territorial conquest through force.

The morality of imperialism was vigorously debated in most of the national circulation magazines in the United States in the 19th century. With respect to Hawai'i, the change in focus and attitude of the *North American Review* is typical. One of the century's most influential magazines, the *Review* was founded in Boston in 1815 by William Tudor. One of a group of Boston professional men, who were mostly Harvard-educated, he modeled his publication on the *Edinburgh Review* and strove to provide a forum for the emergence of a uniquely American mode of discourse on art, society, and politics. Despite his stated efforts, the *Review* was seen as distinctly regional in character up to 1878, employing among its editors such eminent New Englanders as James Russell Lowell, Charles Eliot Norton, Henry Adams, and Henry Cabot Lodge. When the *Review's* base of operations shifted to New York in 1878, the regional stigma ceased to apply.

Variously a quarterly, bi-monthly, and monthly, the *Review* climbed in circulation from 600 at its outset, to 3,200 in 1830 (its

highest point until after the Civil War), and peaked at 76,000 in 1891. While its substantial format of an average of 200 or more pages and its reputation for regional bias may have discouraged broader circulation, by 1820 the *Review* had attained a prominent place in the libraries of Boston intellectuals and Washington policy makers. In 1835, a competitor hailed the *Review* as "the sole exponent, in its peculiar sphere, of our national mind, character, and progress."<sup>3</sup> At the peak of the *Review's* circulation in 1891, the London-based *Review of Reviews* said:

It is unquestionably true that the *North American* is regarded by more people, in all parts of the country, as at once the highest and most impartial platform upon which current public issues can be discussed, than is any other magazine or review. . . . It is to be noted that politicians of both the great parties and members of the legal professions are more likely to read the *North American Review* than any other periodical.<sup>4</sup>

Frank Luther Mott, the foremost—albeit controversial—historian of American magazines, singled out the *North American Review* as ". . . a remarkable repository, unmatched by any other magazine of American thought through nearly a century and a quarter of our national life."<sup>5</sup> The metamorphosis of Hawai'i in the pages of this august journal may therefore provide some answers to the question of how, in less than a century, this sovereign island nation came to be transformed into a fruit ripe for plucking by American hands.

Only one article on Hawai'i appeared in the *Review* prior to the arrival in Hawai'i of the American missionaries in 1820. Its author maintained: "Of these islands, so interesting to navigators, and from their situation and production, so important to the scientific and commercial world, a short account may be worthy of some attention."<sup>6</sup> But real interest did not pick up in the Boston-based journal until people with whom its staff and readers could easily identify took up residence in the Islands.

Between 1826 and 1842, six articles about Hawai'i of varying lengths appeared in the magazine. Ostensibly book reviews, these

pieces began by defending missionary labors and evolved into a strident advocacy of the United States presence in the Islands. The writers were literary men, not explorers, and their purpose was philosophical rather than descriptive. Where Davis, the author of the first article had condemned the effects of civilization on nature, these writers favored it. Their increasingly judgmental and negative portrayal of the native Hawaiians during this 16-year period of missionary advocacy served to buttress arguments for intervention—at least when it was presented as being of a moral and instructive (that is, spiritual) nature.

Captain C. Davis, U.S. Merchant Marine, introduced the *North American Review*'s readers to the Sandwich Islands in 1816. He began his account with the geographical coordinates of the Islands, noting their distance (2,700 miles) from the mainland United States and their favorable location on the route from there to Asia. He reviewed Captain James Cook's account of the "discovery" of Hawaii in 1778 and used Cook's death at the hands of the natives to express his own views on the effects of contact between nature and civilization. With regard to the events leading up to the death of the great navigator, Davis maintained:

In this, as in most other instances of fatal collision between civilized and uncivilized men, it appears the former has been in the wrong. The blame may, almost without exception, be laid on those, whose might induces them to trample on right.<sup>7</sup>

Typical of European and American visitors and their biases at that time, Davis described the Hawaiians as an artless and comparatively uncivilized race, with a childlike fascination for the accoutrements of progress. He explained their perceived tendency toward petty thievery, which had so shocked his seafaring contemporaries, as merely the product of misunderstanding based on the lack of a concept of private property in Hawaiian culture. He noted with approval that when visiting him, the Hawaiians "... did not go to any part of the ship without permission, and refrained from spitting on the decks."<sup>8</sup>

Davis's greatest praise, however, was reserved for the Hawaiian King, Kamehameha I. Describing him as a "copper-colored Alexander," he noted that both Kamehameha and his most powerful rival for control of the Islands had attempted to enlist American aid, and expressed the vain hope that "none of our countrymen will voluntarily assist in a war of conquest."<sup>9</sup>

After recounting some additional vignettes in which Kamehameha I and his subjects fared much better than their "civilized" adversaries, Davis concluded his morally nonjudgmental but still politically interested account with a promise (unfulfilled) to send other anecdotes of this interesting sovereign and people.<sup>10</sup> Neither the King nor his people would be compared so favorably to civilized men again in the pages of the *North American Review* in the 19th century.

Travelogs such as Davis's were a staple of the *North American Review* up to 1825. During the remainder of the 1820s and continuing well into the 1830s, editors such as Alexander Hill Everett, former U.S. Minister to Spain, and John Gorham Palfrey, Minister of Boston's Brattle Street Unitarian Church and a Professor of Sacred Literature at Harvard, tended to emphasize the literary review aspect of the magazine, as well as initiating a broader focus on political affairs outside the United States. Book reviews often took precedence over first-person narratives as vehicles for expressing opinion. These efforts, which generally considered several works on a single subject, were more than just simple book reports. The authors were not identified, but their editorial stands could not have been more boldly stated.

From the first review of books on Hawaiian topics in 1826 to the last in 1842, the value of introducing civilization into the Islands was not questioned. The reviewer of William Ellis's *Journal of a Tour Around the Largest of the Sandwich Islands* claimed that "it could not escape the more intelligent of the natives that the foreigners among them were a superior race to themselves."<sup>11</sup> He acknowledged in passing that some pre-missionary contacts between Westerners and natives had been less than salutary but was certain that the missionaries could reverse the damage. On the basis of five years of reports on missionary labors, he predicted:

The different branches of human improvement will act reciprocally on each other, intelligence will spread and be an excitement and guide to industry, and, in process of time, laws, morals, religion and social order will be established and the blessings of civilized life secured.<sup>12</sup>

The *Review* maintained its pro-missionary stance well into the 1840s when the United States missionary involvement in Hawaiian politics and commerce was coming under frequent attack from other foreign residents of the Islands, foreign governments, and some mainland observers. While defense tactics varied in response to the nature of the charges, the basic assumption that the missionary presence was justified remained the same. What did change was the prognosis regarding the effects of this presence on Native Hawaiians and their nation.

Responding in 1828 to what he perceived as implications by the Right Honorable (George Anson) Lord Byron in his *Voyage of His Majesty's Ship Blonde to the Sandwich Islands, in the Years 1824-5* that the Islands would be better off under British control, the *North American's* reviewer said:

Whether it would be wise, or unwise, for the British or the American cabinet to desire colonies in the Pacific we leave for others to decide. There is no doubt, however, that things are now tending toward the occupation of these Islands by a foreign power.<sup>13</sup>

He no longer regarded independence as a viable option, nor did he believe that the Hawaiians could rise to the level of their missionary tutors.

As missionary involvement in Island politics increased, so did the need to defend this involvement from its non-missionary critics. The Hawaiians' alleged need for salvation was painted in increasingly desperate colors. Once merely innocent children of nature, they became licentious cannibals "sunk in darkest ignorance."<sup>14</sup> Criticism of the missionaries was dismissed as being motivated by the desire of some entrepreneurs to take unfair advantage of the natives. Such criticism, therefore, did a great injustice to a group of men "who have rendered one of the most signal services to the

cause of Christianity and civilization since the Reformation.”<sup>15</sup> Exactly how these servants of civilization had benefitted the Hawaiians was not clear.

The reviewer of Reverend Samuel Northrup Castle's *An Account of the Visit of the French Frigate Artémise to the Sandwich Islands, July, 1839*, did not deny the French government's charge that Protestant missionaries had influenced the Hawaiian King, Kamehameha III, to ban Roman Catholicism from the Islands. It suited his argument in this instance to characterize the monarchy as “the legitimate government of an independent state,” but he was not bothered by a United States protectorate over this “independent state.”<sup>16</sup>

By the time that Cleveland's *A Narrative of Voyages and Commercial Enterprises* came under scrutiny in 1842, the writer for the *North American Review* no longer attempted in any way to excuse the non-religious aspects of missionary labors. He noted that while commercial interests in the past had been the enemy of Christianity, “Christianity was no enemy of commerce.”<sup>17</sup>

The commercial involvement of United States interests in Hawai'i increased during the years between 1842 and 1893. The Great *Mahele* or divison of lands in 1848 enabled settlers to buy land and create large sugar plantations. In 1872, the Kamehameha dynasty, which had ruled the Islands since 1796, came to an end. William Charles Lunalilo was elected to the throne, and during his brief tenure American influence in Hawai'i was secure. However, with his death in 1874 and the election of David Kalākaua to succeed him, that situation began to change.

King Kalākaua made numerous diplomatic overtures to the United States, including the Reciprocity Treaty of 1875 which encouraged trade between the two sovereign nations and opened the way for large-scale American investments in Hawaiian agriculture. This treaty was renegotiated in 1887 to include the American acquisition of a naval base at Pearl Harbor and to bind U.S. mercantile interest even closer to those of her Hawaiian-born sons and daughters. However, on the domestic front, the administration of Kalākaua was very threatening to his non-native subjects. He dismissed cabinets at will and generally acted with a

degree of independence which caused members of the rising *haole* (Caucasian) oligarchy to fear for their continued fiscal security.

The *Review* was silent on these matters, preferring to concentrate on events closer to home—primarily the Civil War and problems of urbanization and industry. The magazine itself experienced some hard times during these years. Publication had been at first bi-monthly, then quarterly, and again bi-monthly. Owners and editors came and went at a rapid rate, and the magazine finally moved to New York in 1878, at which time it became primarily a monthly and a political rather than literary journal.

Mainland commercial interest in Hawai'i as a market increased following the end of post-Civil war reconstruction. The annexation question provided a suitable topic for the *Review's* new format, and in 1893 representatives of both sides began to present their views in its pages. While ethics was still a concern, the debate no longer centered on the missionaries. The primary mode of discourse was geopolitical and commercial.

Many previously isolationist Americans began to look with favor on involvement in the Pacific as the need for new markets for the products of industry became acute. Hawaiian citizens of North American extraction and United States citizens residing in Hawai'i had been seeking stronger ties to their homeland for a long time. Now such ties began to seem mutually advantageous as Americans were forced into competition with Great Britain and Germany for trade routes to the Orient.

Lorrin A. Thurston, former Minister of the Interior for the Kingdom of Hawai'i and founding member of the Annexation Club in 1892, which became synonymous with the Provisional Government following the revolution of 1893, had gone to Washington in 1892, ostensibly in connection with Hawai'i's participation in the Chicago World's Fair. In reality, he was there to gauge U.S. congressional sentiment regarding annexation. He found the press and the Secretary of State to be sympathetic. Minister Stevens, meanwhile, was inquiring of his superiors in Washington as to "... how far in the present matter the naval commander may deviate from established international conventions should a coup be attempted."<sup>18</sup>



The Hawaiian Monarchy was overthrown on January 17, 1893, in Honolulu by a group of Caucasian businessmen and sugar planters, most of whom had either commercial or personal ties to the United States, or both. As promised to them by Minister Stevens, troops from the U.S.S. *Boston* came to their aid. The troops stationed themselves near the Government Building, where they so intimidated the Queen's forces that on January 17, when the annexationists seized the palace and proclaimed themselves as the "Provisional Government," the Hawaiians did not resist. Thurston and his supporters now faced the more difficult task of convincing the United States to take them in.

Richard Hofstadter, in his treatise on Social Darwinism, wrote that annexation in the 1890s was not initially a popular cause. After analyzing the works of such contemporary disciples of Darwin as Josiah Strong, John W. Burgess, and naval strategist Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan, he concluded:

At the time of imperialist friction there was nothing to stop the advocates of expansion and the propagandists of militarism from [employing] the shibboleths of group survival or from transforming them into a doctrine of group assertiveness and racial destiny to justify the ways of international competition. The survival of the fittest had once been used chiefly to support business competition at home; now it was used to support expansion abroad.<sup>19</sup>

This reasoning proved to be very efficient at bridging the gap between moral and religious beliefs and commercial and strategic interests. Examples of it abound in the *North American Review* throughout the 1890s.

Thurston himself presented the opening argument for annexation in the pages of the *Review*. Beginning with a capsule history of diplomatic relations between the United States and Hawai'i, he noted in passing the missionary involvement that had been central to earlier discussions of the Islands but dismissed it as no longer significant. He told his story in the same glowing terms used to defend the missionaries, but for him it was:

American capital and enterprise [that] pioneered an advance into Hawaii, built up a friendly political state, and created not only the best customer, for its population, that the United States has, but produced one of the most remarkable exhibitions of creative industrial energy in history.<sup>20</sup>

Thurston informed his readers that immigrants from the United States and their descendants now owned two-thirds of the cultivated land in Hawai'i and controlled 74 percent of the sugar export business. Along with imports to Hawai'i from the mainland, this had resulted in some \$60 million of profits to American business in the years since the first Reciprocity Treaty. Thurston argued from this that American vested interest in the Islands was justified in overriding Hawaiian political rights to independence. He claimed that the natives had been unable to sustain the independent state which American residents had helped them to create. Since the domination of Hawai'i by any other foreign power was as unacceptable to his American readers as it was to him, the choice seemed clear. "The manifest destiny of all relations heretofore existing between the United States and Hawaii has been towards ultimate political union,"<sup>21</sup> according to Thurston, and the sooner it happened the better—for both parties. The rights and desires of the native Hawaiians were no longer relevant to the participants at this level of negotiations.

In the debate format characteristic of the *Review* at this time, Thurston's article was paired with a discussion of the constitutional objections to annexation by George Ticknor Curtis. This aged and eminent constitutional scholar argued that the acquisition of an independent state by force would reflect badly on the reputation of the more powerful partner. He predicted accurately that an investigation into the Hawaiian revolution would find that ". . . it was fomented by interested foreigners and that the leaders of the revolution received improper assistance from the United States authorities."<sup>22</sup> He countered Thurston's pragmatism with an appeal to national morality and cautioned that the acquisition of Hawai'i in such an unethical manner would substitute manifest destiny for the Constitution and lead to a system of mercantile

colonies on the Roman model. This ethical argument, and others like it, would be successful until manifest destiny could be reformulated in terms consonant with the morality of the time. But even Curtis did not rule out the possible acquisition of Hawai'i at some future date by other means. Nor did he discuss whether or not the wishes of the native Hawaiians should be taken into account.

Even Theo. H. Davies, an English subject and the guardian of Hawaiian heir-apparent Princess Ka'iulani, did not deny the possibility of a more ethical move toward annexation. Responding to Thurston in the June 1893 issue of the *Review*, he accurately summarized the former's position with regard to the paramount commercial interests of Americans in Hawai'i. He made a doomed plea for restoration of the Monarchy with British-educated Ka'iulani as a ruler more acceptable by Western standards than the deposed Queen Liliu'okalani. He expressed the belief that if the true facts of the revolution became known to the American people they would reject annexation. In this he was correct for a time, but the anti-monarchy, anti-British sentiments dominant in America precluded his hopes for Ka'iulani.

The Princess herself seems to have been resigned to failure, as indicated by the rather plaintive reasoning she gave for her presence in Washington: "Perhaps if I do not go, the Hawaiians will say to me hereafter, 'You might have saved us and you did not try.'" <sup>23</sup> Discussions of the morality of imperialism tended more and more frequently to end on a similar note of resignation in the face of inevitable circumstances throughout the interim period of the Hawaiian Republic (1894-1900).

In December, the *Review* again served as a forum for opposing viewpoints regarding the Hawaiian question. Eugene Tyler Chamberlain titled his piece "The Hawaiian Situation—I. The Invasion of Hawaii" and argued that United States involvement in the coup had damaged his country's reputation for fairness among nations. Recently appointed U.S. Commander of Navigation, he considered the nature of his country's military involvement to be of paramount importance. He cited Daniel Webster's affirmation of Hawaiian independence in 1851, and he stressed the injustice of a strong nation overruling the desires of a weaker one

by force.<sup>24</sup> Chamberlain had no quarrel with Thurston about the benefits to the United States of annexing Hawai'i. The question for him was one of procedure, not outcome.

The aforementioned Minister Stevens responded to Chamberlain with "The Hawaiian Situation—II. A Plea for Annexation," based on his premise that the Kamehameha dynasty (with whom Daniel Webster had dealt) was now extinct, and no native successor Stevens considered worthy had appeared to lead the Hawaiian nation. The popularity and effectiveness of Kalākaua and Liliu'okalani among their own people were conveniently ignored. Stevens saw the question facing the United States not as one of national reputation, but of duty to civilization and to its own citizens and their descendents in the Islands. He maintained that intervention was justified "... in the name of what is most sacred in Christian civilization, in behalf of a noble American colony, holding the advanced post of America's progress."<sup>25</sup>

Where Thurston appealed primarily to commercial interests, Stevens shifted the argument toward the logic of irresistible circumstances and benevolent paternalism. He said that while the surviving natives

... should be most kindly dealt with, allowed every possible opportunity to improve themselves, it would be throwing to the winds all past experience and historical instruction to think longer of governing the islands by the native races which comprises about one-third of the population.<sup>26</sup>

Not only was America responsible for her own citizens in the Islands and for her future interests as a naval power, but she also had a duty to those she perceived as her weaker brothers and sisters who could not survive alone.

Stevens also raised the question of Asian residents in Hawai'i. Along with his previous reference to the diminishing number of native Hawaiians, this demographic issue would become a matter of increasing importance in later arguments both for and against annexation. Stevens used it to press for swift legislative action in

order to prevent the territory from being "submerged and overrun by Asiatics."<sup>27</sup> Impressed neither by this sense of urgency nor the righteousness of the annexation cause, Congress rejected the appeals of Thurston and Stevens and refused to annex Hawai'i in 1893.

With "Our Present Duty" by William McKendree Springer in 1893, the argument took a decidedly isolationist and still more racist turn. Springer, a Democrat from Illinois and a Representative to the U.S. Congress for 20 years (1875-1895), had drafted legislation admitting Washington, Montana, and Oklahoma into the Union as states, and he accepted the assessment of Thurston and Stevens that Hawai'i at the time of the revolution was a feeble nation that could not govern itself effectively. He did not believe, however, that the United States had any right to interfere on that basis, or to offer support for the current Provisional Government simply because it was Christian and composed of former American citizens. He noted with dismay in the final article in this series, "The Hawaiian Situation—III. Our Present Duty," that to use this line of reasoning ". . . would make the United States the moral and religious arbiter of the world."

Unlike his predecessors who condemned armed intervention by U.S. troops in the Hawaiian conflict but did not deny that annexation itself was desirable, Springer opposed annexation by any means. He was especially concerned with the fact that annexation would result in Native Hawaiians and Asian residents of the Islands becoming citizens of the United States, eligible for unrestrained migration to our shores and to representation in Congress. He saw the "present duty"<sup>28</sup> of his country as preserving the integrity of its Anglo-Saxon institutions from the diluting influence of such supposedly impure and inferior races.

In the *Review's* "Notes and Comments" section, readers of the magazine expressed parallel concerns and employed similar arguments to those of the writers mentioned above. Lieutenant John A. Harmon, U.S. Army, stressed the military, naval, and commercial advantages of annexation. According to him, the diplomatic process would merely acknowledge what had already occurred *de facto*: "Hawaii is an American State and is embraced

in the American commercial and military system.”<sup>29</sup> He took it upon himself to speak for the Hawaiians, claiming that they preferred United States protection to that of any other nation, and dismissed the argument regarding the native population’s unfitness for citizenship by stating that the Hawaiians were a superior race to American Negroes and in any case were dying off at a rapid rate.

Recently returned from Hawai‘i, wealthy New York industrialist and railroad magnate Arthur Curtiss James credited his pro-annexation stand to first-person experience and enlightened observation. He used the rapidly declining native population to argue against a return to the Monarchy. He seconded Harmon’s observation on the Americanization of the Islands and used this to support the assertion that Hawai‘i was a unique situation that would not lead to the unrestrained imperialism feared by Chamberlain and Springer. He agreed with Thurston, Stevens, and the early defenders of the missionaries that, “It is natural that the white man should become the governing power.”<sup>30</sup>

Whether this domination should take the form of annexation, however, was still an open question. In the “Notes and Comments” for September 1897, another concerned reader recalled Springer’s warning about unrestricted immigration in even more alarmist terms. Writing that “. . . the detested and dangerous Asiatic must reach the American ballot box if Hawaiian annexation is to become an established fact,”<sup>31</sup> he inquired if President William McKinley and the Republican Party were ready for such an awesome responsibility. The answer was yes, but it would take the Siege of Manila in 1898 to sway the balance of public opinion in favor of legislating annexation.

Meanwhile, considering the Darwin-inspired popularity of a scientific approach to the subject of race at the end of the 19th century, it is not surprising that the *North American Review* should contain the advice and comments of medical men with regard to the question of annexation. Dr. Prince A. Morrow, an eminent New York dermatologist and social reformer, noted that the proposed legislation had excited general interest among the citizens of the United States (it was a topic of general news in the popular press) and that the strategic and commercial aspects of the

situation had been set forth elsewhere. He then proceeded to address himself to a discussion of the rapid death rate among the natives since the white man's arrival on their shores. He praised the pre-contact Polynesians and echoed sentiments expressed by Captain Davis back in 1816 that contact with civilization could be lethal—especially with the diseases of civilization.

Race *per se* was not the focus of Dr. Morrow's argument against annexation. Rather, it was the convenient presence of leprosy in the Islands, which he had observed in person and included in his 1889 pamphlet on leprosy. Just prior to the new vote on annexation, in late 1897, he was concerned with "... the serious question of which will be the effect of the absorption of this tainted population on the health interests of this country."<sup>32</sup> While firmly attributing the presence of the disease to foreign influences—most likely the introduction of Chinese laborers to the sugar plantation in the late 1840s (those "dangerous Asiatics" again)—this otherwise enlightened social reformer viewed its subsequent prevalence among Native Hawaiians as proof of their genetic inferiority.

Morrow presented a gruesome scientific description of the physical manifestations and progress of the disease and chronicled the history of Hawaii's attempts to combat it. He judged that the number of lepers would continue to increase, despite a stringent disease management program, and noted that in recent years some white immigrants to the Hawaiian Islands had been infected. Even more alarming to him, however, than the possible dangers inherent in contact with this tainted population by entrepreneurial immigrants who chose to risk it, was the hidden danger from legal emigration of Hawaiians to the United States mainland in the event of annexation. Since in its early stages leprosy defied detection, it would be impossible to exclude carriers of the dread disease from American shores by quarantine. While noting that the disease was more likely to take root in a suitable, i.e., tropical, soil, Morrow still concluded that:

Experience shows that in all countries where leprosy has become epidemic its advance is insidious; it spreads slowly, and before health authorities awaken to the realization of the danger it has made such headway that its future progress cannot be arrested.<sup>33</sup>



Dr. Morrow reformulated his predecessors' overtly racist and emotional objections to Hawaiian annexation in the language of so-called scientific objectivity, with the consequences to be considered from a public health point of view. The "detested and dangerous Asiatics" in this new version became part of a leprous population whose medically diagnosed inferior status precluded further discussion.

By 1898, the combined mercantile interests of Hawai'i and the mainland had won out over the isolationists. Hawai'i was annexed, and while the facts regarding leprosy, of course, had not changed, the situation was now presented to the American public in a much less alarming manner. In the September 1898 issue of the *North American Review*, Dr. Burnside Foster, another eminent dermatologist, educated at Harvard and practicing in St. Paul, Minnesota, looked at the history and clinical profile of leprosy in Hawai'i. A champion of medical ethics, frequent office holder in both state and national American Medical Associations, and long-time editor of the *St. Paul Medical Journal*, he took a prescriptive approach, rather than the cautionary one espoused by Morrow. "Shouldering the white man's burden" in a geopolitical and characteristically messianic context, he stated that:

The responsibility of this matter of leprosy has now been assumed by the United States, and as we already have undertaken to free Cuba from the curse of Spanish rule, so must we undertake the far more difficult task of freeing Hawaii from the curse of leprosy.<sup>34</sup>

In line with his role as a dedicated medical politician, he then took advantage of the situation to propose a bureaucratic approach beneficial to his own profession—the establishment of a department of public health, with a minister in the President's Cabinet.

The cautionary note remained, however, even in this much more clinical and proprietary treatment. Relying on the advancement of scientific knowledge—specifically, better methods of detection in leprosy's early stages—Foster closed with an appeal to the glory of America's civilizing mission. "Shall not America," he asked, "which has already given the world the priceless blessing



of anaesthesia, gain further glory by striking leprosy from the calendar of human afflictions?"<sup>35</sup>

The idea of its own destiny as a nation dominated American attitudes toward territorial expansion in the 19th century. The advocates of Hawaiian annexation could not use simple geographical determinism to support this notion of destiny where their cause was concerned, so they found other justifications. The proclaimed superiority of democratic institutions, the unique suitability of the white race to rule over others, and survival of the fittest all gained acceptance in the pages of the *North American Review* and in other magazines and journals, too.

In retrospect, the *North American Review's* pattern of coverage of Hawai'i in the 19th century is an example of how an elite, supposedly enlightened journal reflected the version of events that most suited the practical requirements of its influential constituents. From its presentation of the Sandwich Islands as a unique, exotic, and independent kingdom inhabited by uncivilized but tractable children of nature in 1816, to that of a nation of feckless heathens who needed outside intervention in order to save both their souls and their kingdom during the 1840s, the *Review* revised its position in the 1890s to accommodate the exigencies of the national political agenda.

After a debate on the merits and procedural aspects of annexation in 1893, the *Review* turned again to advocacy. In the late 1890s, writers for the magazine disenfranchised the native Hawaiians completely by portraying them as dangerously diseased and genetically doomed. Then they reduced the element of danger. Hawai'i was transformed after annexation into a Territory that readers of the *North American Review* would come to feel both comfortable with and justified about placing alongside Cuba and the Philippines as just another item on the United States' ever-lengthening agenda of national responsibilities.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Appendix II, (Washington, D. C.: Government Publications Office, 1895) 400.
- <sup>2</sup> Julius W. Pratt, *The Expansionists of 1898* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1959) 281.
- <sup>3</sup> Frank L. Mott, *A History of American Magazines*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Harvard U P, 1957) 234.
- <sup>4</sup> "The 'North American Review' and Its Editor," *Review of Reviews* 3 (1891): 588.
- <sup>5</sup> Mott, *History of American Magazines* 261.
- <sup>6</sup> C. Davis, "The Sandwich Islands," *North American Review* 3 (1816): 43; hereafter referred to as *NAR*.
- <sup>7</sup> Davis, "Sandwich Islands" 44.
- <sup>8</sup> Davis, "Sandwich Islands" 44.
- <sup>9</sup> Davis, "Sandwich Islands" 50.
- <sup>10</sup> Davis, "Sandwich Islands" 51.
- <sup>11</sup> "Sandwich Islands," rev. of William Ellis, *Journal of a Tour Around the Largest of the Sandwich Islands* (Boston: 1825), *NAR* 22 (Apr. 1826): 340.
- <sup>12</sup> "Sandwich Islands" 364.
- <sup>13</sup> "American Missionaries at the Sandwich Islands," rev. of George Anson (Lord Byron), *Voyage of His Majesty's Ship Blonde to the Sandwich Islands, in the Years 1824-5* (London: 1826), *NAR* 26 (Jan. 1828): 68.
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